

GENERAL INFORMATION

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The CBC now broadcasts regularly to northern Canada. A daily shortwave service carries Canadian news and entertainment across the breadth of the Arctic and thirteen local stations bring network radio to most of the larger communities in the Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

The CBC's interest in the North goes back to 1933 when the weekly program "Northern Messenger" was originated. Still on the air in the winter months as the Network's oldest living program, the "Messenger" carries personal messages to Mounties and missionaries from Mould Bay to Pond Inlet.

The extension of full-scale CBC radio service into the North began in 1958 when Parliament voted special funds for the creation of a Northern Service. The CBC's plan is in two parts: first, the construction of a powerful new shortwave station aimed at the High Arctic, and second, the establishment of local medium-wave stations in all the major centres of the North.

Shortwave

The new shortwave station is still under investigation, but a limited shortwave service was started in September of 1960 when the transmitters of the CBC's International Service at Sackville, N.B. were put on a northern beam for seven hours a day. The transmission is in two parts: a 45-minute program of news in English and French aimed at the Eastern Arctic between 5:00 and 5:45 pm EST; and a 6-hour schedule of news and features for the Central and Western Arctic from 8:00 pm to 2:00 am. All transmissions are carried on two frequencies: 9.585 and 11.72 megacycles.

Besides relaying talks and variety shows from the Trans-Canada Network, the nightly Northern Shortwave Service also presents several programs specially prepared for northern listeners. Northern News Bulletins, combining national and international news with coverage of events in the north, are presented three times each night, at 5:00 pm, 8:00 pm and midnight EST. Regular CBC Network newscasts are carried at other hours during the transmission.

They are followed by sports scores and a summary of weather conditions across the top of the continent prepared for the CBC by the Arctic Forecast Office in Edmonton. Other shortwave features include "Points North" (Saturdays and Sundays) a quarter-hour of interviews and stories recorded at northern points, and "Northern Newsletter" (Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays) in which Canadian Press correspondent Arch MacKenzie reviews the week's events in Ottawa that affect the North.

On Monday, Wednesday and Friday the shortwave service presents an Eskimo-language program, "Uqausi", prepared and announced by the CBC's first Eskimo producer, Miss Ann Padlo.

Local Stations

CBC regional stations have now been set up at 13 communities in the North: at Whitehorse, Dawson City, Watson Lake, Elsa and Mayo (all in the Yukon), Inuvik, Yellowknife, Hay River, Fort Smith and Frobisher Bay (all in the Northwest Territories) and at Fort Nelson, B.C., Fort Churchill, Manitoba and Goose Bay, Newfoundland.

The regional stations, ranging in power from 1000 watts at Inuvik to 40 watts at Watson Lake, provide a full daily program service, much like that of any station in southern Canada. By means of new landlines under construction in the Northwest, the stations in the Yukon are now connected directly to the southern Networks. This live connection will soon be extended to the stations in the Great Slave Lake area. At more isolated points, such as Inuvik, and Frobisher Bay, the CBC stations are supplied with music and drama programs on tapes flown north from Montreal. For live news and sports the stations turn to the Northern Shortwave Service, which they rebroadcast on their own transmitters.

Nine of the thirteen stations have studios and a local staff. (The other four are unmanned relay transmitters.) At the studio locations a high percentage of local programs are produced. These range from the daily Yukon Regional News broadcast at Whitehorse, to the efforts of the Eskimo Drama Group at Frobisher Bay where, scorning the modern mechanical means of creating sound effects, the native thespians bring their own husky dog to the studio to provide the background barks on their original radio dramas.